

## PROSPECTIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS' LEARNING STYLES

**Tartila\*<sup>1</sup>**  
<sup>1</sup>[tartilaogute@yahoo.com](mailto:tartilaogute@yahoo.com)

<sup>1</sup> UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi

### ABSTRACT

Students have their preferences or styles of learning. To teach effectively, teachers need to consider these preferences because students' learning style is one factor contributing to students' success in learning. This paper aimed to identify and prepare information about students' primary perceptual learning style preferences and minor learning preferences. I conducted research at the State Islamic University of Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin (UIN STS) Jambi. I elicited data using Reid's (1987) Perceptual Learning Style Preferences (PLSP). The research findings show that the student's primary perceptual learning style preferences were auditory (mean = 40.2). The minor perceptual learning style preferences were kinesthetic (mean = 37.0), visual (mean = 36.7), tactile (mean = 36.3), group (mean = 35.8), and individual (mean = 33.9).

*Keywords:* English teachers, Learning Styles, Prospective

### A. INTRODUCTION

Students are the young generation who determine the future of the nation. Therefore, while studying at university, students are required to learn many subjects. In addition, they are required to be able to learn on their own and analyse problems in learning. Therefore, to help students study well, lecturers are obliged to provide learning that makes it easier and motivates students to always be successful while studying.

Students learn in a way that works best for them. The preferred method by which a student absorbs, processes, comprehends, and retains information is an individual's learning style. According to Willingham et al. (2015), learning styles are not differences of ability but rather preferences for processing certain types of information or for processing information in certain types of way. Individual learning styles are influenced by one's prior experiences and cognitive, emotional, and environmental factors (Hidrie et al., 2021).

In order to incorporate best practices into their daily activities, curriculum, and assessment, lecturers must comprehend the differences in their students' learning styles. Understanding students' learning styles will assist them in developing strategies to overcome their weaknesses and take advantage of their stage (Sari, 2014). Dekker et al. (2012) also argued that students learned better if they receive lesson according to their preferred learning styles. Lecturers can also control and prioritise instruction and educational experience received by the students based on students' learning styles and need.

While observing my students study, I noticed some of them preferred written and spoken explanations. In contrast, others are more receptive to visual information like videos and pictures. Some people learn better independently, while others prefer to learn actively and interactively. Therefore, I am interested in exploring their learning style more comprehensively. Understanding students' learning styles will assist both lecturers and students in developing strategies to overcome their weaknesses and take advantage of their stage, which, in the end, will impact their academic competence (Hidrie et al., 2021; Sternberg et al., 2008; Willingham et al., 2015). In addition, Reid (1987) believed that identifying the learning style preferences of non-native speakers may have wide-ranging implications in curriculum design, materials development, student orientation, and teacher training.

### **1. Learning Style**

According to Sternberg et al. (2008), style is individual differences in approaches to tasks that can make a difference in the way in which and, potentially, in the efficacy with which a person perceives, learns, or thinks. Further, Willingham et al. (2015) define learning styles as preferences for processing certain types of information or for processing information in certain types of way. Thus, every learner has their own style to learn and process information or lessons they receive.

While several, at least 20 style dimensions have been identified, only eight of them would be particularly important for second language learning, as singled out by Oxford and Anderson (1995). According to Hamed and Almabruk (2021), of the 20 style dimensions developed,

Perceptual Learning Style Preferences developed by Reid (1987) are the most popular in educational research.

Perceptual Learning Style Preferences Questionnaire (PLSPQ) measures Reid's (1987) Perceptual Learning Styles Preferences. The PLSPQ has six types of language learners' styles: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile, group, and individual. Reid (1995) defined each learning style as follows.

Visual learners prefer to learn via the visual channel. Therefore, they like to read a lot, which requires concentration and time spent alone. Visual learners need visual stimulation through bulletin boards, videos, and movies.

Auditory learners enjoy the oral-aural learning channel. Thus, they want to engage in discussions, conversations, and group work. These students typically require only oral directions.

Kinesthetic learners imply total physical involvement with a learning environment such as taking a field trip, dramatizing, pantomiming, or interviewing. Tactile learners learn with one's hands through manipulation or resources, such as writing, drawing, building a model, or conducting a lab experiment.

Group learners prefer studying with others. Group studying makes them feel comfortable and is the best way to acquire knowledge. Students also value class interaction and class work with other students, and they remember information when they work with two or three classmates. Stimulating group work will help learners understand new information better.

Individual learners prefer studying alone, and they learn best independently. Such students learn new material best when reading it themselves. Progress and achievement are best visible when they learn alone.

## **B. METHOD**

The current study was survey research. The population in the current research was all EFL learners majoring in English department at semester three who have studied transactional speaking subjects. They are students of university of Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin (UIS STS) Jambi. The population number is 69. However, only 58 students did the survey. They were 46 female and 12 male students. Their age range between 19 and 22. They were all Indonesians and participated in this research willingly.

I used Reid's (1987) Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire (PLSPQ) to obtain data. This was adapted from the C.I.T.E. Learning Styles Instrument, Murdoch Teacher Centre, Wichita, Kansas 67208. According to Lee et al. (2016), Reid's PLSPQ has been extensively utilised in ESL and EFL contexts. In other words, the PLSPQ is the most suitable questionnaire to obtain data regarding the learning style of non-native English speakers (Jamulia, 2018). The questionnaire, designed and validated for non-native speakers, consists of five statements on the six learning styles to be measured: visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, tactile, group learning, and individual learning. The students responded based on the Likert scale; they chose one of these: 1-strongly agree, 2-agree, 3-undecided, 4-disagree, 5-strongly disagree. I asked the current study participants to answer the questionnaire based on what worked best for them when they learnt a transactional speaking subject.

My position as a lecturer of a transactional speaking subject might influence the responses of the research participants, who are also my students. I did not ask for the participants' names in the questionnaire to address this. I also gave the survey through Google Forms. They also did the survey voluntarily or without enforcement.

The students' responses to the PLSP questionnaire were analysed using descriptive statistics to measure the frequencies, percentages, means, and averages. The result of the statistical calculation is then interpreted and explained to gain the conclusion. The sum of each category of perceptual learning style preferences (visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, tactile, group and individual) were then multiplied by two. Then, I classified the result of the multiplication into major (range 38–50), minor (range 25–37) and negligible or negative (range 0–24).

### C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the mean scores of all perceptual learning style preferences. Based on the result of mean scores of each perceptual learning style preference, the current research participants are major in auditory learning style (mean= 40,2) and minor in kinaesthetic (mean= 37,0), visual (mean= 36,7), tactile (mean= 36,3), group (mean= 35,8), and individual learning style (mean= 33,9).

Table 1. The Mean of Each Perceptual Style Preference

	N	X-Min	X-Max	$\sum X$	Mean
Visual Style	58	11	25	2129	36,7
Auditory Style	58	14	25	2333	40,2
Kinesthetic Style	58	10	24	2145	37,0
Tactile Style	58	10	25	2104	36,03
Group Style	58	13	24	2078	35,8
Individual Style	58	7	24	1969	33,9

As structured on the PLSP questionnaire, five questions or statements constitute each perceptual learning style preference. In other words, these statements represent the characteristics of each perceptual learning style. Therefore, it is essential to know to what extent the degree of each statement of the major perceptual learning style preference (auditory learning style) and the minor perceptual learning style preferences (kinaesthetic, visual, tactile, group, and individual learning style) preferred by students in the current research.

#### 1. The Description of Auditory Learning Style Statement

The students' major preferred learning style in the current research was the auditory learning style. The following table presents the statements on this learning style.

Table 2. The Description of Auditory Learning Style Statements

No	Statements on Auditory Learning Style	N	$\Sigma X$	Mean
1	When the teacher tells me the instructions I understand better.	58	257	4,43
2	When someone tells me how to do something in class, I learn it better.	58	206	4,41
3	I remember things I have heard in class better than things I have read.	58	220	3,80
4	I learn better in class when the teacher gives a lecture.	58	234	4,03
5	I learn better in class when I listen to someone.	58	239	4,13

The mean score of each statement shows that the auditory learner students were enormously high on statement 1 among the five statements in auditory learning style. Statements 2, 4, and 5 were preferred at a high level. The highest is statement number 1, “When the teacher tells me the instructions, I understand better”.

## 2. The Description of Kinaesthetic Learning Style Statements

The Kinaesthetic learning style was the most dominant minor learning style preference the students have. Table 3 presents mean scores of this learning style based on the participants’ responses.

Table 3. The Description of Kinaesthetic Learning Style Statements

No	Statements on Kinaesthetic Learning Style	N	$\Sigma X$	Mean
1	I prefer to learn by doing something in class.	58	245	4,22
2	When I do things in class, I learn better.	58	192	3,32
3	I enjoy learning in class by doing experiments.	58	214	3,69
4	I understand things better in class when I participate in role-playing.	58	241	4,15
5	I learn best in class when I can participate in related activities.	58	216	3,72

The data of mean scores in Table 3 shows that the kinaesthetic learners in the current research were intensely high on statement 1, “I prefer to learn by doing something in class”.

### 3. The Description of Visual Learning Style Statements

The table 4 depicts the mean score of visual learning style statements preferred by students in the research.

Table 4. The Description of Visual Learning Style Statements

No	Statements on Visual Learning Style	N	$\Sigma X$	Mean
1	I learn better by reading what the teacher writes on the chalkboard.	58	239	4,11
2	When I read instructions, I remember them better.	58	226	3,90
3	I understand better when I read instructions.	58	246	4,25
4	I learn better by reading than by listening to someone.	58	220	3,79
5	I learn more by reading textbooks than by listening to lectures.	58	190	3,28

The mean score of statements in Table 4 shows that the students were high on the statement 3, “I understand better when I read instructions”.

### 4. Description Analysis of Tactile Learning Style Statements

Table 5 illustrates the Tactile Learning Style Statements preferred by students at the current research.

Table 5. The Description of Tactile Learning Style Statements

No	Statements on Tactile Learning Style	N	$\Sigma X$	Mean
1	I learn more when I can make a model of something.	58	236	4,07
2	I learn more when I make something for a class project.	58	221	3,80
3	I learn better when I make drawings as I study.	58	189	3,26
4	When I build something, I remember what I have learned better.	58	250	4,30
5	I enjoy making something for a class project	58	201	3,47

The mean scores in Table 5 show that the participants' tactile learning styles were intensely high on the statement, "When I build something, I remember what I have learned better".

## 5. Description Analysis of Group Learning Style Statements

Table 6 illustrates the mean scores of group learning style statements preferred by the current research participants.

The mean scores in Table 6 indicates that students were enormously high on statement 4, "I enjoy working on assignment with two or three classmates".

Table 6. The Description of Group Learning Style Statements

No	Statements on Group Learning Style	N	$\sum X$	Mean
1	I get more work done when I work with others.	58	219	3,78
2	I learn more when I study with a group.	58	115	2,84
3	In class, I learn best when I work with others.	58	215	3,71
4	I enjoy working on an assignment with two or three classmates.	58	263	4,54
5	I prefer to study with others.	58	203	3,51

## 6. Description Analysis of Individual Learning Style Statements

Table 7 illustrates the mean scores of individual learning style statements preferred by the current research participants.

Table 7 illustrates the mean scores of individual learning style statements preferred by the current research participants.

Table 7. The Description of Individual Learning Style Statements

No	Statements on Individual Learning Style	N	$\sum X$	Mean
1	When I study alone, I remember things better.	58	220	3,80
2	When I work alone, I learn better.	58	212	3,66
3	In class, I work better when I work alone.	58	190	2,27
4	I prefer working on projects by myself.	58	195	3,35
5	I prefer to work by myself.	58	196	3,38



The data of mean scores in Table 7 show that the students prefer to study in groups rather than individually. They tended to study in small groups with two or three other students. Nevertheless, among the five statements related to individual learning style, the students were high on statement 1, "When I study alone, I remember things better".

The current research was aimed at identifying English department students' learning styles in learning the Transactional Speaking subject. The finding shows that the dominant learning style preferred by student was Auditory. The finding of this study do not support the previous research. One study by Mkonto (2015) examined students' learning styles at the Faculty of Education at a university in South Africa and found that most students have individual learning styles. Differently, Bogamuwa (2017) found that most university students who study English as a general subject in a Sri Lanka university had a kinaesthetic learning style. Similar to Bogamuwa's research finding, Tyas and Safitri (2017), who researched the learning styles of English department students of Brawijaya university, found that both male and female students were high in kinaesthetic learning styles. Also, Jamulia (2018), who researched English department students' learning styles at the State Islamic Institute of Ternate Indonesia, found that the most dominant learning style was visual.

These findings, therefore, indicated that many factors can affect the students' learning styles. Reid (1987) suggested that suggested that complex variables should be considered regarding an individual's learning style. Considering the current research was conducted in Indonesia, there might be influence from the culture of Indonesian students. In addition, the specific subject the participants learn possibly affects the learning style. The current research participants were English department students who had finished studying transactional speaking. I asked them to answer the questionnaire based on their experience in studying the subject (Transactional Speaking). This notion is supported by Al Roomy (2023) and Hidrie et al. (2021), who concluded that the total learning environment affects students' learning styles and suggest several courses of action for students, teachers, and policymakers. Thus, future researchers could conduct research that considers other specific subjects learned by considering variables, such as gender and competence, employing interviews, tests, and classroom observation.

Regarding the current participants' learning styles, it is essential to detailly describe the major and minor learning styles they had as follows:

### **1. The Characteristics of Major (Auditory) Learning Style.**

The following are the characteristics of auditory learning style as the dominant learning style the students in the current research have. I ordered the characteristics based on the sequence of the mean scores.

- a. Students understand better if the teachers give instructions on what to do.
- b. Students learn the lesson better if someone tells them how to do something
- c. Students learn better in class when they listen to someone.
- d. Students learn better in class when the teacher gives a lecture.
- e. Students remember things they have heard in class better than things they have read.

Thus, the students prefer spoken directions over written directions. This preference might be due to the nature of the transactional speaking subject, which demands students to perform their speaking ability by first listening and watching the model shown by the lecturer or video derived from the internet.

### **2. The Characteristics of Minor Learning Styles.**

The the current study's findings show that the students are primarily focused only on auditory learning style preferences, and they are minor on other learning styles: kinesthetic, visual, individual, tactile, group, and individual learning styles. However, they are still able to learn in these learning styles. The following are the reported characteristics of the conditions where the students can learn enormously well through their minor learning styles.

- a. Students prefer to learn by doing something in class.
- b. Students understand things better in class when they participate in role-playing.
- c. Students understand better when they read instructions.
- d. Students remember what they have learnt better when they build something.
- e. Students enjoy working on assignment with two or three classmates.

Similar to the explanation of the aforementioned dominant learning style, the student's preferences were affected by the nature of the transactional speaking subject. This preference

was shown by the student's interest in role-playing and cooperating with two or three classmates.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

The primary perceptual learning style preference of the third-semester students of UIN STS Jambi who have learnt a transactional speaking subject is auditory learning style (mean=40.2). In contrast, the minor learning style preferences are kinesthetic (mean=37.0), visual (mean=36.7), tactile (mean=36.3), group (mean=35.8), and individual learning style (mean=33.9).

Auditory learners learn best when hearing information from lecturers and other classmates. The learner must verbally express what he/she learns and solve problems by discussing them and role-playing in class with two or three classmates. Therefore, in the future, transactional speaking lecturers need to consider the current study's findings to adjust their teaching to students' learning styles to achieve the optimal outcome for the students.

#### **REFERENCES**

- Al Roomy, M. A. (2023). The relationship among students' learning styles, health sciences colleges, and Grade Point Average (GPA). *Advances in Medical Education and Practice*, 10. <https://doi.org/10.2147/AMEP.S395720>
- Bogamuwa, I. N. J. (2017). Learning style preferences of English as Second Learners in the Open University of English for General Academic Purpose (EGAP) Programme. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 171, 8.
- Dekker, S., Lee, N. C., Howard-Jones, P., & Jolles, J. (2012). Neuromyths in education: Prevalence misconceptions among teachers. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 3. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2012.00429>
- Hamed, M., & Almabruk, A. (2021). Perceptual learning style preferences of English major Libyan university students and their correlations with academic achievement. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 12(5). <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.all.v.12n.5.p.1perceptual>

- Hidrie, M. Z. I., Muhammad Zulfiqar, S., & Naqvi, H. (2021). Assessing learning styles of medical students using Kolb's learning style inventory and their association with preferred teaching methodologies. *Journal of Pakistan Medical Association*, 71(4), 13. <https://doi.org/10.47391/JPMA.1437>
- Jamulia, J. (2018). Identifying students learning style preferences at IAIN Ternate. *International Journal of Education*, 10(2), 9. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/>
- Lee, C., Yeung, A. S., & Ip, T. (2016). Use of computer technology for English language learning: do learning styles, gender, and age matter? *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 29(5), 18. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2016.1140655>
- Mkonto, N. (2015). Students' learning preferences. *Journal of Studies in Education*, 5(3), 24.
- Oxford, R. L., & Anderson, N. J. (1995). A crosscultural view of learning styles. *Language Teaching*, 28(4), 14. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444800000446>
- Reid, J. M. (1987). The learning style preferences of ESL students. *Tesol Quarterly*, 21(1), 24.
- Sari, A. K. (2014). Analisis karakteristik gaya belajar VAK (Visual, Auditorial, Kinestetik) mahasiswa pendidikan informatika angkatan 2014. *Jurnal Ilmiah Edutic* 1(1), 12.
- Sternberg, R. J., Grigorenko, E. L., & Zhang, L.-f. (2008). Styles of Learning and Thinking Matter in Instruction and Assessment. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 3(6).